

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-22, and 25-44 are now present in this application, of which claims 1 and 19 are independent. By this Amendment, claims 1, 18, 19, 41, and 42 have been amended, and claims 43 and 44 have been added.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Request for Withdrawal of Finality of Office Action

Applicants respectfully submit that this Amendment is being filed concurrently with an RCE. Accordingly, withdrawal of the finality of the previous Office Action, and an Office Action on the merits with respect to claims 1, 2, 4, 6-22, and 25-44 are respectfully requested.

Examiner Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the personal interview that was conducted on September 2, 2008. During the interview, Applicants' representative discussed the rejection of independent claims 1 and 19 over the prior art.

In particular, Applicants' representative argued that the purpose of supplying steam in the two references, Sulzmann and Nakamura, were completely different. Sulzmann provides steam to the bottom of the washing machine to heat wash water to a desired temperature. Nakamura, on the other hand, applies steam to laundry to pre-treat stains. Furthermore, the laundry being treated by steam in Nakamura is held between the lid and the cabinet while the steam is applied. Because of these reasons, one of ordinary skill in the art would have not looked to modify Sulzmann based on the teachings of Nakamura.

In addition, Applicants' representative discussed clarifying the location of the steam generator and the direction that the steam is delivered into at least one of the tub and the drum. The Examiner agreed that amending the independent claims 1 and 19 to require that the steam generator be located between the tub and the casing, and that the steam tube having one end in communication with the storing space and the other end in communication with the inside of at

least one of the tub and the drum for downwardly supplying the steam toward a center of at least one of the tub and the drum would overcome the present rejection.

The claims have been amended in the manner discussed during the interview, and are believed to place the application into condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has set an instance wherein the claim language lacks antecedent basis. In order to overcome this rejection, Applicants have amended claim 18 to correct the deficiency specifically pointed out by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 16-20, 26-35, and 38-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sulzmann in view of Nakamura and Applicants admitted state of the art. Claim 13-15, 36, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sulzmann and Nakamura and in further view of Glucksman. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steam drum washing machine including "a steam generator for heating the water to generate steam and supplying the generated steam into at least one of the tub and the drum, the steam generator being located between the tub and the casing," and a water supply unit having "a steam tube having one end connected to the steam

generator and the other end in communication with the inside of at least one of the tub and the drum for downwardly supplying the steam toward a center of at least one of the tub and the drum.” Independent claim 19 has been similarly amended.

Applicants respectfully submit that these combinations of elements as set forth in independent claims 1 and 19 are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Sulzmann, Nakamura, and ASA, as discussed more fully during the Examiner Interview discussed above.

Applicants note that while independent claims 1 and 19 have been amended to delete reference to a detergent box and assembly and an auxiliary water-supply tube, the independent claims distinguish over the applied art for the reasons noted above.

None of the other references relied on by the Examiner address the identified deficiencies with regards to Sulzmann and Nakamura. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

With regard to dependent claims 2, 4, 6-18, 20-22, and 25-42, Applicants submit that these claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from one of independent claims 1 and 19, which are allowable for the reasons set forth above, as well as for their additional subject matter. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Claims 43 and 44

Claims 43 and 44 have been added for the Examiner’s consideration. Applicants submit that claims 43 and 44 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1 or 19, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 1 or 19, which are believed to be allowable.

In addition, claims 43 and 44 recite further limitations which are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Consideration and allowance of claims 43 and 44 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chad D. Wells, Registration No. 50,875, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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